a Vaudeville Comedian

Mrs. Robert W. a Court Summons, Expedients with He Has Served Papers On

Miss Eva Tanguay, Who Got a Summons in Her Bouquet of Flowers in the Middle of Her Vaudeville Act.

Mr. Hartman succeeded in pushing past the butler and rushed into the dining-room of Mr. Ben Ali Haggin just as soup was being served to the well-known artist millionaire and his guests. The intrusion so upset Mr. Haggin and one of his guests, Mr. Ireland, that they dropped their napkins and soup spoons and kicked Hartman out of the dining-room and through the hall and past the butler and out of the front door, and one final vigorous boot sent the faithful process server through the air and on to the sidewalk."

David Hartman (on the Right) and His Patient Partner, Max Kaminsky, Each with a Court Summons in His Hand Like a Couple of Vaudeville Comedians.

(Continued from Preceding Page)

often follows desperate cases, where I served the summons.

"As I look back over my career I remember only one failure. The man was dead. I never tried to serve no corpse, but one. That funeral didn't fease me, however, not one whit. This came when I was young at my profession, and very zealous. I got to the man's house and inquired for him.

" 'He's dead,' wept his wife's mother, lifting the hem of her apron to her eye, while she burst out into a fresh convulsion of grief; 'dead—poor Mike—the best son-in-law I ever had. Come in, the wake's now going on. The more the merrier.'

"I stepped in and was led up to the casket. I looked at Michael Collins Rafferty, as the silver name plate on the coffin set forth. I stole a glance at my summons; the name was the same. Then I was puzzled. For the man before me, in his last repository, was dead. Unmistakably dead, a lily in his hand. He was not faking. Yet I was supposed, as a real, live, go getter, to serve that summons. I forgot whether my instructions had said, 'serve dead or alive' or not. So I just excused myself to Mike's mother-in-law for a minute.

" 'I want to go call up the florist,' said I to her. 'I want a wreath, something refined, yet appropriate.'

"I went to the corner drug store and called up the lawyer who had given me the summons.

" 'He's dead,' I told him. 'It's no stall. I saw him in his casket. "Gone But Not Forgotten" reads the floral offering at his head. What shall I do with the summons?'

" 'Tuck it in his hand and beat it back home,' said the lawyer to me. So I started out. Now, Max Kaminsky, my partner, was with me, and as we walked back to dead Mike's I told Max what the lawyer had told me to do.

" 'I must tuck it in his hand and then beat it,' said I to Max.

" 'Wait a minute,' urged Max, and he stopped right under the bright moon. 'I want to think,' said he. Then he did think. Both of us do, often. He thought a long while. Then he told me, 'let's not go back to Mike's at all. Even if you do tuck it in his hand he can't appear in court, unless you bring him in, in his casket. Which is foolishness, as anyone can see. So let's beat it back before we get that whole bunch chasing us for slipping in a summons where the lily only should be. Let's—just for once—pass up service altogether.'

"I thought quite a while, too, and I made up my mind we might more healthily. So we never went back to finish the wake at Mike's."

Now, ask Dave Hartman, or ask his wiry, black-eyed little partner, Max Kaminsky, a word or two in regard to the kind of people they serve, and they will rub their hands with pride of profession. Although they are democrats; although they are no respecters of persons, still, they will very well tell you that, while on their professional errands, they move in the very best circles. With gusto they enumerate the names of one or two of their famous clients.

"There's Mrs. Robert Chambers," Dave tells you. "She's literary—or literary by proxy; because, as anyone can tell you, there's not a little stenographer in the whole country who hasn't wept over at least one of her husband's romantical heroines. Then, forsaking literature, there's Haggin, already also mentioned. Mrs. Carrero, daughter of Anna Held, was one of the people whom we served at her hotel, three years ago; Eva Tanguay, the actress; Lew Fields, the actor manager, are two others, and Phillip Morris, agent for Harry Lauder, is another illustrious New Yorker who, before now, had to take a little summons from us, whether he wished to or not.

"When it comes to titles, I," says Hartman, "I served the Count—I forget his name—whom Marjorie Rambeau once was engaged to marry. You know, later this same Count was arrested for a little check which he just happened to forge. When I served him, however, he was a perfect gentleman, as always. He merely put the summons in his pocket and remarked, 'how absurd; of course there is some mistake; these beastly tradesmen should remember who I am.'

"Oh yes, that Count acted as if he had almost five dollars in his pocket. But he didn't fool us, for we know human nature."

Now, there are certain little technicalities of his profession, the absolute mastery of which make Mr. Hartman such an infallible process server. For, as he followed Mrs. Chambers even into her bedroom, so has he followed others by ways devious and dark till their hand extended, went out to meet his hand, also extended, with the process. He has his ways of bringing his clients, of low and high degree, up to the scratch. As he will tell you.

"The hardest person to serve, of all New York City, is the man or madame, firmly intrenched in one of those cliff dwelling, Riverside apartment houses, where you have to be announced.'

The ordinary process server, approaching such a stronghold of the sued, is asked: "Your business, Mr. Smith, with Mrs. Jones, in Apartment No. 10, twenty-third floor?"

"I am a limb of the law," the ordinary process server will allow, very majestic; "I am come to bring Mrs. Jones a little summons."

The telephone girl will tell this to Mrs. Jones, who will promptly report that she is out of town for six months. So the ordinary process server goes away, sad-eyed and defeated—a dismal failure. But does Mr. Hartman do likewise? Mr. Hartman is more resourceful.

Instead, he steps right up to that telephone, and he speaks, himself, no less, in sweetest tones to Mrs. Jones, up on the twenty-third floor.

"So sorry to bother you, lady," says he, "but, yer see, I got a little summons; a nice little summons; not a horrid old summons, and I'll tie it up in pink ribbon if it will please you any better. Fact is, I'll do anything, if you only will be nice and come down and receive it like a lady. Or else let me come up; it's immaterial. And I'll do anything to oblige. But"—and Mr. Hartman's tones take on the emphasis of his really sterling and firm character—"but—lady—Mrs. Jones, if you don't let me serve it all good and proper and peaceful, then I will have to step up to every lady that gets off of the elevator.

"I will have to say to her, 'how do you do, are you Mrs. Jones? Oh, no, then I will not serve this summons on you for failure to pay for those two gowns you got over at Madame Mandes, on Fifty-seventh street. Oh, you aren't Mrs. Jones, lady. Beg pardon—my mistake. It is Mrs. Jones I want; it is her little dressmaker's bill of three hundred and forty-five dollars, which is unpaid. That, Mrs. Jones,' purrs Process Server Hartman through the telephone, 'unless you come down is what I will have to tell each lady that steps off the elevator.'

"And Mrs. Jones sees the light quickly. 'Come up,' says she, 'come up at once with your process. After all, you are worse—quite a deal worse, than the horrid old dressmaker.' "

That's one ruse of Mr. Hartman's. He has others. For, sometimes, when they won't let him in, he tells them he is the gas man, and then pushes the process into their hands when they open for him to read the meter. Or else he tells them, if it is a hotel, that he is the hotel management—the Whole Works, in fact, and they open to the majesty of the American Hotel, and meet the majesty of the law, instead. Again, with a very stubborn actress, Eva Tanguay, Mr. Hartman decided to serve the process by way of a dainty little attention to the lady. As previously noted, David Hartman is no boor—in fact, he believes in tenderness—to ladies.

So he bought a box seat, nearest the stage, and bought a bouquet—for $2.98, and, in the centre of the peonies and tulips, he tucked the process, with one corner neatly turned down, like a proper billet doux.

When the beauteous Eva was bowing, at her seventeenth curtain call, Brother Hartman, enthusiastically ripping his white gloves, leaned far out across the box and held the bouquet to Eva. She took it. And then he called to her, very masterfully, "read the note."

She took the note—the process was served, as Dave called out again, "Eva, it's a summons!"

And what did Eva do? Eva called back to Hartman, "I don't care!" Which three words, as everybody will admit, formed the chorus of Eva's famous song. In fact, as we all know, these three words are quite the trade mark of Eva Tanguay.

Now, no man ever achieves greatness without some degree of danger going with it. Neither does Dave Hartman. He has had his escapes, and many of them have been narrow—very narrow. Take, for instance, the time he went down to Jamaica, Long Island, accompanied by a fair Polish beauty, who had an appointment with her estranged husband. Dave went in his official capacity, to serve a notice of absolute divorce, which the fair one at his side was contemplating against the erstwhile husband of her bosom.

"I'll point him out to you," said the lady, mapping out the ground beforehand, "and then go to meet him. You come up with the paper," she told Dave, "just after me."

All right. But, by law, when a man serves papers for divorce he must tell what they are. Therefore, according to programme, the lady greeted her husband; then Dave came on; he put his hand in his pocket, started his little speech, "I have here a——"

And the husband reached, mighty quick, for something on his hip. He flashed a revolver at Dave, while Dave went on, "process."

Down sank the husband, in the dust, his revolver at his side.

"Thank God you said that word in time!" said the husband; "I thought you were reaching for your gun so I reached for mine first. I thought you were a gink my wife had hired to 'croak' me. Just two seconds more and you would have been a dead man. Here, help me up! Give me that process! It's about time she got a little action. I've been hoping for it for weeks. Now, come and have a drink with me on your narrow escape."

Dave and the husband went off, arm in arm, the best of friends. As Dave will explain: "Sometimes a husband served with divorce papers will break your head open; at other times he'll press a five spot on you for your kind thought.

" 'You scoundrel, how do you dare come serving summonses on me, to put asunder whom Heaven itself hath joined together,' one husband roared at me, chasing me out his back dooryard, at the end—the sharp end—of that homely article of domestic use, the kitchen broom.

"And the next husband opened his arms. 'Have a cigar,' said he. 'On second thought, have two cigars. Say, how long before I'll have that divorce, all legal?'

"No, you never can tell how it'll take 'em," David declares. For he has seen human nature, in all her moods. He has made love to the stenographer, for business reasons; he has bought candy for the typewriter girl, so she will tell him where and when he will be able to pop upon her employer; he has even hobnobbed with the neighbors, helping a mother rock the cradle, on many successive nights, what time he was on the still hunt for one Mr. Hat, a defaulting debtor, who had gone through the bankruptcy courts of Albany.

The hint went forth from Albany that Mr. Hat had concealed many of his assets from his creditors. He was wanted. He had taken up a residence at No. 869 Holmes street, the Bronx, where David went, many times, in fact. At last, after he had obligingly wheeled the baby carriage about for the lady in the first floor tenement for many nights she told him that it was true Mr. Hat lived on the top floor, even as David suspected.

"But why you never see him come in this front door of ours," said she, "is because he goes in the door of the house next to ours and crawls over the roof of that into the window of his own tenement in our house."

After David found this out he suddenly lost all interest in the baby. But next night he got Mr. Hat and served his summons just as that worthy was slipping one leg out of the window of the fire escape on the seventh floor.

One hectic experience David Hartman still trembles over as he recalls it. That came when he served a summons on an artist who lived in an apartment on Seventy-second street.

"But what do you wish with Mr. Battleby?" asked a young lady who always appeared at the studio door when David knocked.

"Lady, lady," said David, in his earnest way, "it is so important, it is so secret, I cannot tell anybody but Mr. Battleby himself."

"Well, if you can't tell me you can't see him," said the young lady, with finality.

Now, most ignorant, resourceless laymen would think that here, at last, was a situation where David Hartman was stumped. But David just drew out of his bag another one of his little tricks.

"I knew Battleby was inside," said he. "And I knew what would bring him out was a terrible commotion. So I started to make a noise. I stamped up and down. I moved chairs, loudly, as if I were hunting for Battleby beneath them. I opened and closed windows; I called, in fervent tones, 'Battleby, oh Battleby!'

"At last he came out. 'What's the meaning of all this rumpus?' he asked me, and I gave him the summons. Then the young lady had hysterics.

" 'This man has insulted me,' said she, 'he opened the windows and moved the chairs all around.'

"Isn't that just like a woman? As if moving the furniture was an insult to her. Well, at that the artist threw off his coat. He rolled up his sleeves and he struck out. One lamm landed on my chin and I fell to the floor, where I remained. I felt all right, quite all right, as I lay there on the floor, but I knew if I didn't do something pretty quick I wouldn't feel all right. So I lay there, pretending I was unconscious.

" 'Oh, you killed him, you killed him,' moaned the young lady. 'Oh, why will you always be so impetuous. Now, besides the summons, we've got a murder on our hands. But I always said, if you kept on it would be the electric chair. Let's get some water and see if we can bring him to.'

"They ran for water. They threw first a cupful, then a bowlful in my face. I never stirred. But when they started to get a bucket I feebly rose up.

" 'Thank God he's saved; he breathes, he's sitting up,' said the young lady. And she stooped over me and herself, personally, helped me to arise.

"Which I did. Then things took a turn for the better. The artist slipped a twenty-dollar bill in my hand.

" 'Here,' said he, 'buy yourself a copy of Shakespeare's complete works. I'm sorry I punched you. Honest I am. Forgive and forget. That's my motto. And thank you for the little summons, thank you so much.' It was coming sooner or later anyway.'

" 'Yes,' said I, 'if not to-day, to-morrow. You know, 'we serve, where others fail,' has always been my motto since I took up this business.'

" 'Of course,' agreed the artist, 'you serve, where others fail.'

" 'You betyer,' said I, 'that's my motto as I said.'

"So we parted, good friends."

Finally, with a long, last, wistful sigh, David sighs his deep regret.

"What is it, David?" the curious may ask him.

"It's regret, pure and simple," said David. "And that's for one phase of my business which has gone—has departed. They are breweries. We never serve summonses on them any more. Because there ain't none any more. But—when there was—they was the best people either I, or my partner, ever met. No fuss, no cracks on the back at breweries; no broken heads, nor speedy, accelerated shoves down a flight of stairs; just a ready hand, all stretched out for the summons. And then—a glass of beer. Sometimes, even, two glasses of beer. Never—at any brewery I ever served a summons did they let me go without my stein.

" 'Stay,' they always urged, 'stay and try our product.'

"I always did—then. But now, no more. Ah, those were the happy days. No, since prohibition, process serving ain't what it used to be."